

Reclaim Education

Notes on the global struggle

ISM Global Week of Action to Reclaim Education 2014

May Day 2014 marks the start of the Global Week of Action which will extend throughout the week until May 8th. Some planned actions have been in the works for months while others intend to take a more spontaneous approach to convey their discontent.

Students at the University of Osijek in Croatia proposed the call for a global week of action related to the struggle against the increasing commercialisation of education and for free emancipatory education earlier this spring. Dozens of student organizers from various parts of the world then came together during regular chat meetings and agreed to organize for the global week of action by coordinating assemblies and reaching out to our friends.. Here are some of the actions scheduled to take place over the week.

May Day demonstrations are planned to kick off the week in Rabat (Morocco), Multan (Pakistan), London, (UK), New York City, Chicago, Raleigh, and Arcata (US). Beyond the marches there are a variety of free schools, radical reading groups, general assemblies and other creative gestures planned (such as a guerilla theater in Amsterdam or street art in Rio de Janeiro).

Students from a number of

universities will start the week (as well as conclude on the 8th) with a series of simultaneous banner drops at their respective campuses.

Generally groups arrange their own autonomous activities linking local problems and their efforts with the common global effort. By no means should a gesture of solidarity override the importance of engaging grassroots issues. The framework itself consists simply of a call to action and the international joint statement on education (see page 2), which is presently supported by more than a hundred groups worldwide.

To visually link the activities around the world it, we are seeking to share common

symbols (such as the red square) and slogans emphasizing free education. The timeframe 1-8 May 2014 was chosen to link the struggle within the education system with the workers' struggle on the global level. So goes the slogan, "what was once the factory is now the university." Our grandest hope is that you might join the global effort in your own local way. How you go about furthering this movement is up to those who participate. Make sure to contact at the global ISM mailing list to announce your activities or simply to get updates about the next global chat..

The Week of Action would not have been made possible

if it were not for the work of many individuals doing their part to spread the message of solidarity throughout the student struggle. The extensive collaboration of the translators alone made it possible to converse without the immediate limitation of language. Many thanks to those who put in work. We hope to further overcome these artificial barriers in future semesters. For now, stay safe and see you in the streets.

For more information, updates, and student art work visit... reclaimededucation.wordpress.com.

1world1struggle



About this newsletter

This newsletter is part of the communication infrastructure of the independent platform International Student Movement (ISM). The ISM is being used and shaped by individuals and groups around the world who are struggling against the increasing commercialisation of education and for free emancipatory education for all. This newsletter is the result of voluntary work done by a few individuals who are passionate about the cause. The positions expressed are not in any way representative for any group or the ISM as a whole.

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Banner made by Union des étudiants pour le changement du système éducatif (UECSE) in Morocco

The International Joint Statement on Education

The International Joint Statement on Education has been endorsed by hundreds of student, staff and faculty groups. Here are some points we would like to emphasize as May Day approaches. Around the world over the past decade students, pupils, teachers, parents and employees have been protesting against the increasing commercialization and privatization of public education, as well as fighting for free and emancipatory education. Many of us use the International Student Movement as a self-managed platform initiated to exchange information, to network and to co-ordinate protests at both the international and the global levels. Since the ISM platform was initiated in November 2008 various global days and weeks of action were co-ordinated.

We strive for structures based on direct participation and non-hierarchical organization through collective discussion and action. Anyone who identifies with the struggle against the privatization of public education, and for free and emancipatory education can join and participate on as well as shape the platform!

What are we struggling against?

The effects of the current economic system on people and education systems: tuition fees or any form of fees which exclude people from accessing and equally participating in education, student debt, public education aligned to serve the (labour) market; The so called Bologna-Process (as

with its counterparts around the world) is aimed at implementing education systems that primarily train people in skills serving the labour market. It promotes the reduction of costs for training a person, shortens the length of time spent studying, and produces underqualified workforces; turning education into a commodity as part of the commodification of all aspects of life; the significant and increasing influence of business interests on basic budgets for public education; the significant and increasing budget cuts on public education worldwide; the privatisation of public funds through the subsidisation of private educational institutions; the commodification and exploitation of labor within educational institutions.

We stand against discrimination and exclusion within any educational institution based on: socio-economic background, for instance by charging fees so that people with less money can't participate equally, nationality, performance and academic record, political ideologies and activities, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, and skin color. We stand against the prioritisation of research towards commercially valuable patents rather than open knowledge freely available to all. Public educational institutions are increasingly forced to compete for private sponsorships to do (basic) research; at the same time private funds tend to be invested into research promising to be profitable, leading to a decline in funding for areas of research which may be

important but not deemed economically lucrative. Educational institutions and participants are evaluated on the basis of economic profitability and often compete to receive additional public funding based on this criteria. We stand against the prioritisation of income-generating research grants ahead of education and basic research. We also oppose activities for the military within educational institutions: no research specifically for military purposes, no recruiting and advertising activities for the army

What are we struggling for?

CONTENT: free and emancipatory education as a human right. Education should primarily work for the emancipation of the individual, which means: being enabled to critically reflect and understand the power structures and environment surrounding him-/herself. Education must not only enable the emancipation of the individual but society as a whole

education as a public good serving public interests, academic freedom and choice: freedom to pursue any educational discipline

ACCESS: We seek to be free from monetary mechanisms of payment by participants and any kind of discrimination and exclusion and therefore freely accessible to all individuals. This means sufficient funding for all public educational institutions, whether or not they are deemed profitable.

STRUCTURE: All educational entities/institutions should be

democratically structured, meaning direct participation from below as a basis for decision making processes.

Why on the local and global level?

The impacts of the current global economic system create struggles worldwide. While applying local pressure to influence our individual local/regional politics and legislation, we must always be aware of the global and structural nature of our problems and learn from each other's tactics, experiences in organizing, and theoretical knowledge. Short-term changes may be achieved on the local level, but great change will only happen if we unite globally. Education systems worldwide do what they are intended to do within the economic and state system(s): select for, train and create ignorance and submission. We unite for a different education system and a different life. We stand united against any sort of repression by governments worldwide directed at people involved in the struggle for

free and emancipatory education. The following groups and individuals support this statement, pledge to spread it, and to get actively involved in efforts to network and unite education activist groups worldwide in the future.



Above: 2014 NYC May Day Flyer.
Below: Kiev, Ukraine 2012

